



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

WILLIAM J. AILA JR.
CHAIRPERSON

For Immediate Release: August 23, 2012

PUBLIC WARNED TO KEEP OUT OF WATER AROUND WHALE CARCASS IN PAHOA

Signs posted on coastline – sharks actively feeding

HILO -- The Department of Land and Natural Resources is warning the public to keep out of the nearshore and ocean waters off Pahoa, due to the presence of tiger sharks that are being attracted to a decomposing 50-foot long sperm whale carcass.

DLNR's aquatic resources and enforcement divisions are working together to post shark warning signs and to direct the public to stay out of the water within one mile on either side of where the carcass located on the rocky shoreline in front of the Hawaiian Beaches Subdivision.

Numerous sharks are present and actively feeding on the carcass in nearshore waters. The carcass is also considered a public nuisance because of its offensive odor.

The state office of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary at DLNR, in partnership with NOAA's Fisheries Service, is working with a private marine salvage company to remove the carcass. The public is advised to remain out of these waters until three days after the carcass is removed. DLNR will issue updates as they become available.

Sperm whales are protected under the federal Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act as well as Hawaii Revised Statute Ch. 195-D. Taking and possession of any part of the animal is prohibited without prior authorization from NOAA and the State. Disturbing and tampering with the carcass is also prohibited.

An area resident first reported the carcass in the morning on Wednesday, August 22, 2012. A Hawaii County Fire Department Helicopter confirmed the presence of the carcass by about mid-morning, and it was up against the shore by the afternoon.

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Video courtesy of Honua Consulting is available on YouTube at
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhf8AkItMfc>

For more information news media may contact:

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